

United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- + Russian President Boris Yeltsin confirms suspension of troop withdrawal from Baltic States until agreements have been signed on status and conditions of these troops during withdrawal period; Baltic Heads of State protest Russian decision.
- + Co-Chairmen of International Conference on Yugoslavia to visit New York this week at request of Secretary-General, to attend Security Council consultations on former Yugoslavia.
- + After eight days of consultations in San Salvador with President Alfredo Cristiani and the FMLN, Assistant-Secretary-General Alvaro de Soto reports agreement on upcoming stages of peace process in El Salvador.
- + Special Representative for Middle East, Edouard Brunner, to represent Secretary-General at Ottawa meeting of Working Group on Refugees.
- + Secretary-General cites reports of pattern of "gross and widespread human rights abuses" in Haiti, in report to General Assembly on situation in that country.
- + Croatian Prime Minister appeals for international assistance in providing shelter for 750,000 displaced people; Vice-President calls for action to combat "ethnic cleansing" and gather information on violations of humanitarian law.
- + Special Representative for Angola, Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping and Chief Military Observer met on Saturday with Angolan President to discuss cease-fire; to attempt today to arrange meeting with leader of Union for Total Liberation of Angola.
- + Percentage of professional posts subject to geographical distribution occupied by women in Secretariat rose to 30.6 per cent this year from 29.2 per cent in 1991; percentage of women in policy-level positions up from 8 to 11 per cent.

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+ Establishment of integrated United Nations Offices in six former States of Soviet Union stresses inter-relationship between peace and security, democracy and human rights, Secretary-General tells Tokyo Conference on Assistance to New Independent States of the former Soviet Union.

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While reaffirming Russia's intention to withdraw its troops from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, President Boris Yeltsin has confirmed in a letter to the Secretary-General that the withdrawal has been suspended until the signing of a series of agreements dealing with the status and conditions of these troops during the withdrawal period. The letter also addressed the situation of the Russian-speaking populations in the three Baltic States and asked the Secretary-General to encourage those States to "implement in good faith and fully, their undertakings under bilateral and international agreements in the area of human rights and freedoms". President Yeltsin proposed that the question of "mass violations of human rights and freedoms in these States" be included in the agenda of the current session of the General Assembly.

The letter was handed over to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali by the Russian Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Yuliy Vorontsov, at a meeting on Friday, 6 November.

Meanwhile, the three Baltic States have protested the suspension of withdrawal of Russian troops from their territory, saying it "complicated the political situation in the Baltic States and might pose a serious threat to peace and stability in northern Europe". The protest was contained in a joint letter to the Secretary-General, also dated 6 November.

Asking the Secretary-General to direct special attention to the situation in the region, the three Heads of State of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania warned that, pending the Russian position in the upcoming discussion in the General Assembly on the question, the Council of Baltic States "might appeal" to the Security Council "if it becomes necessary".

The letter was signed by Vytautas Landbergis, President of the Supreme Council of Lithuania; Anatolijs Gorbunovs, Chairman of the Supreme Council of Latvia; and Lennart Meri, President of Estonia.
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The Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on Yugoslavia, Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen, will be coming to New York from Geneva "about midweek", according to Conference Spokesman Fred Eckhard. Their visit is at the request of the Secretary-General to be present at Security Council consultations on the former Yugoslavia, at a date to be finalized.

Briefing the press on the activities of the Co-Chairmen, the Spokesman said that Lord Owen was in Brussels today attending a meeting of European

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Community Foreign Ministers. Mr. Vance met today with the Surgeon-General of Yugoslav Army, to discuss the disappearance of people from the hospital in Vukovar since the town fell to the Yugoslav People's Army during the war between Serbia and Croatia. Over the weekend the Co-Chairmen also met with President Dobrica Cosic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and with President Kiro Gligorov of Macedonia.

In related news, the Security Council held consultations this afternoon on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and will convene formally on the matter tomorrow afternoon.

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Following eight days of consultations in San Salvador, conducted separately with President Alfredo Cristiani and with the General Command of the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN), Assistant-Secretary-General Alvaro de Soto last night reported to the Secretary-General that agreement had been reached regarding the upcoming stages of the peace process in El Salvador.

The Secretary General and Mr. de Soto commended President Cristiani and the FMLN for the constructive spirit and genuine cooperation which both sides had shown in overcoming the difficulties which prompted the mission by Under-Secretary-General Marrack Goulding and Mr. de Soto. It augured well for the smooth unfolding of the coming delicate phases of the process, which would culminate with the formal end of the armed conflict on 15 December.

Mr. de Soto was scheduled to return to New York today to convey details of the arrangements to the Secretary-General, who is expected to report soon on the issue to the Security Council. The Secretary-General's Special Representative, Iqbal Riza, will continue to coordinate with the Government of El Salvador and the FMLN the arrangements for the verification tasks of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL).

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A United Nations official announced today that the Secretary-General would be represented by its Special Representative for the Middle East, Ambassador Edouard Brunner, at the Working Group on Refugees, in the framework of the multilateral Middle East peace negotiations. The meetings of the Working Group on Refugees are scheduled to take place in Ottawa on 11 and 12 November.

Ambassador Brunner will be assisted by representatives of the United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

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In his recent report to the General Assembly on the situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali

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has cited reports of a pattern of "gross and widespread human rights abuses" one year after the coup d'Etat in Haiti overthrew the democratically elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

According to the report, dated 3 November, the violations included extra-judicial executions, severe ill-treatment amounting to torture and arbitrary and illegal arrest, intense harassment and intimidations of opinion-makers such as journalists, priests, lawyers and grass-root leaders, reprisals against popular expressions of support for the overthrown President, and restrictions on the right of freedom of association. In addition, the report said, the outside interference in Haiti's judicial system had reportedly intensified in the past year.

With regard to the economic situation in Haiti, the Secretary-General pointed out that the country's economy was in a state of free fall with tens of thousands of jobs having been cut in the industrial and services sector. The reduction in family purchasing power had caused the food situation, already precarious, to deteriorate further since October 1991, and malnutrition affected the most vulnerable groups of society, particularly young children. The deteriorating situation explained why Haitians sought, at the risk of their lives, to flee their country, the Secretary-General noted. Since last May, Haitian boat people had been returned to their country without any preliminary questioning, a decision, he wrote, which the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had deplored and which was now before the United States Supreme Court.

Faced with the seriousness of the situation, the United Nations agencies in Haiti had established an inter-agency committee under the direction of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, which had drawn up a draft integrated plan of humanitarian action. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs was committed to collaborating closely with the efforts by the Organization of American States (OAS) in order to face up to the situation in Haiti, the report said. Document A/47/599

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Pointing out that the four and a half million inhabitants of Croatia were having to shelter 750,000 displaced people, the Croatian Prime Minister has called for financial support from the international community, and for the building of refugee camps in safe areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In a letter to the Secretary-General dated 6 November, Prime Minister Hrvoje Sarinic says that Croatia's deteriorating social and economic situation is being further stressed by the refugee crisis. He also pointed out that the majority of refugees were being accommodated by private families who until now have received no monetary assistance.

The Croatian Vice-President, Vladimir Seks, in a letter dated 5 November, called on the Security Council to implement the Vance Plan in connection with the prevention and combating of "ethnic cleansing". Mr. Seks, stressing Croatia's cooperation with moves to gather information on violations of

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humanitarian law in the former Yugoslavia and to prosecute the perpetrators, urged other States and international organizations to do likewise. He also called the Council's attention to the information collated by civilian and military members of the United Nations Protection Force and suggested that it be conveyed to the War Crimes Commission.

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The Secretary-General's Special Representative for Angola, Margaret Anstee, and Under-Secretary-General Marrack Goulding, accompanied by General Unimna, the Chief Military Observer of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM), met for an hour and a half on Saturday with Angolan President Eduardo dos Santos, according to the Spokesman for the Secretary-General. They discussed the cease-fire negotiated by the United Nations and ways to restore the peace process in the country.

Ms. Anstee and Under-Secretary-General Goulding had been trying today to make contact with Jonas Savimbi, President of the Union for the Total Liberation of Angola (UNITA), to arrange a meeting at the earliest convenience. A provisional agreement had been reached for a meeting between the parties on Sunday in Huambo to discuss the cease-fire and steps to restore the peace process, but the meeting was never confirmed.

Ms. Anstee and Mr. Goulding, at midday today, visited a group of UNITA members staying in the Ministry of Defence in Luanda and found them to be in good health. The Spokesman, referring to reports of capture by UNITA of a group of Brazilians and Russians experts, announced this afternoon that all but three Russians had been released.

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In 1992, the percentage of professional posts subject to geographical distribution occupied by women in the Secretariat had reached 30.6 per cent, a small increase from 29.2 per cent in 1991, a United Nations Spokesman told correspondents today. In policy-level positions, he went on to say, the percentage of women rose to a level of 11 per cent, up from 8 per cent a year ago.

Under the terms of a resolution adopted on 16 December 1991, the General Assembly set as its target a level of 35 per cent of all professional posts and 25 per cent of the policy-level positions to be occupied by women by 1995.

The Spokesman's comments followed the recent publication of the Secretary-General's report on the professional status of women in the United Nations Secretariat.

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The establishment of integrated United Nations Offices in six former States of the Soviet Union would stress the inter-relationship between peace and security, democracy and human rights, while providing humanitarian

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assistance and creating the conditions for long-term development, the Secretary-General has said. The statement was contained in a message to the third Coordinating Conference on the Assistance to the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union, held on 29 and 30 October in Tokyo.

Reading out the message at the Conference, Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima, Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO), announced the establishment of integrated offices in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan and an inter-agency coordinating mechanism for exchanging information on United Nations activities in the region.

The Coordinating Conference was attended by representatives of 70 countries and 19 international organizations and confirms the commitment of the international community to a collective approach in tackling the challenge of transition in the new States.

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CORRECTION:

In its Highlights dated 3 November, Central News had erroneously reported the presence of Kofi Annan, Assistant-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, in Luanda. In fact, Mr. Annan was not in Angola at that time.

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